IN THE DRAWINGS

Applicants propose to insert the caption "PRIOR ART" into Fig. 2 of the drawings in accordance with the accompanying ANNOTATED SHEET SHOWING CHANGES.

Enclosed herewith is a REPLACEMENT SHEET in which the above change has been incorporated.

REMARKS

The claims have been amended to more clearly define the invention as disclosed in the written description. In particular, claim 6 has been cancelled, while claims 1 and 11 have been amended to include the limitations of cancelled claim 6. In addition, the claims have been amended for clarity.

Applicants believe that the above changes answer the Examiner's objection to claims 5, 6, 8 and 9, and respectfully request withdrawal thereof.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 9, 10 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by International Patent Application No. WO 02/086876 to Hendriks et al. The Examiner has further rejected claims 3 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hendriks et al. In addition, the Examiner has rejected claims 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hendriks et al. in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0036836 to Kishima et al. Furthermore, the Examiner has rejected claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hendriks et al. in view of U.S. Patent 6,974,939 to Yamada.

Applicants believe that the above changes to the claims obviates the Examiner's 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and 103(a) rejections with regard to Hendriks et al.

The Hendriks et al. reference discloses an optical lens system comprising at least one lens of a synthetic material, which

includes an objective lens and an auxiliary lens. The objective lens has a greater diameter than a diameter of the auxiliary lens. The auxiliary lens is manufactured as one with a lens holder to form an integrated part. A width of this integrated part is greater than a width of the objective lens. In an assembly process of the lens system, the objective lens is mounted within the lens holder of this integrated part. With the auxiliary lens being incorporated within the integrated part, the auxiliary lens is relatively easy to handle and manipulate in the assembly process (page 12, lines 4 to 11).

Claims 1 and 11 now include the limitation "said outer part includes a removable part arranged to be removed during an assembly process, said removable part extending to a second width in a direction perpendicular to said second optical axis, said second width being greater than said first width."

As noted by the Examiner, "Hendriks does not teach wherein said outer part includes a removable part arranged to be removed during an assembly process."

The Kishima et al. publication discloses an optical system, method of producing optical system, and optical pickup, in which the optical system includes two optical lenses 6 and 30. The lens 30 is formed from a substrate in which portions of the substrate are removed by etching.

The Examiner has indicated that Kishima teaches "wherein said outer part includes a removable part arranged to be removed during an assembly process (transformation form Fig. 5A to 5B)."

Applicants submit that while the Examiner's characterization of Kishima is correct, this does not comport with Applicants' claimed invention. In particular, the limitation of claim 1 (and claim 11) states "said removable part extending to a second width in a direction perpendicular to said second optical axis, said second width being greater than said first width". Since the first width is the width of the of the first lens set element, the removable part extends outside of this first width. However, in Kishima, the "removable part" lies totally within the width of the first lens 6. Applicants submit that this difference is important in that, as described in the specification on page 7, lines 13-25, by being wider (and thicker) than the lens stack of the first and second lenses of the first and second lens set elements, the removable part serves to protect the optical surfaces of the lenses and facilitates handling and manipulation of the lens stack. Following the assembly process, the removable part may then be detached.

Claim 7 includes the limitation "wherein said outer part comprises an area of reduced thickness in a direction parallel to said second optical axis, and wherein said removable part is detachable by severing said outer part in said area of reduced thickness."

The Examiner states "Kishima further teaches wherein said outer part comprises an area of reduced thickness in a direction parallel to said second optical axis (thickness at element 32 of Fig. 5B) and wherein said removable part is detachable by severing

said outer part in said area of reduced thickness (the etching that occurs from Fig. 5A to 5B)."

Applicants believe that the Examiner is mistaken. In particular, the area of reduced thickness in Kishima is the end result of the "severing" (actually removal) of the removable part, that is, there is no area of reduced thickness prior to the removal of the portion of the substrate by etching. As such, the area of reduced thickness is not severed to detach the removable portion, but rather, the area of reduced thickness is formed by the removal of the "removable" part. If, in Kishima, the outer part were to be severed in the area of the reduced thickness, then there would be nothing to which the first lens 6 could be attached.

The Yamada patent discloses an optical recording/reproducing apparatus for multi-layer recording media that alleviates adverse effect of spherical aberration beyond compensation by changing the numerical aperture of combined lenses, in which an objective lens unit 7 includes a holder 8 which, as shown in Fig. 2 therein, appears to be thicker than the maximum thickness of the lens stack.

Applicants submit, however, that claim 8 states that thickness limitation relates to the removable part or the outer part. If the holder 8 of Yamada were to be removed, there would be nothing to hold the optical lens unit 7 together.

In view of the above, Applicants believe that the subject invention, as claimed, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious

by the prior art, either individually or collectively, and as such, is patentable thereover.

Applicants believe that this application, containing claims 1-5 and 7-11, is now in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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